

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 2

IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

The survey covered economic, emotional, physical and sexual abuse and survivors were randomly selected by trained interviewers on the basis that they had experienced some form of abuse. Respondents were asked about the nature and consequences of the most serious incident of abuse, as well as details of abusers, the physical and emotional impact of abuse, experiences with professional and informal service providers, and their general perceptions of safety.

Survivors were asked how they would define the abuse of women. The largest proportion defined it as physical abuse (35%). Fewer described it as a combination of physical, sexual, emotional and economic abuse (18%), while a small percentage of women defined it as sexual abuse (3%). Some defined abuse in terms of its impact. Many of the women described abuse as ignoring women's basic human rights as people (23%), as disrespect and/or mistreatment (15%), or described abuse as being forced to do something against their will (5%).

Most of the 42 women interviewed said they had been economically abused (79%), with almost as many describing emotional abuse (76%) and physical abuse (71%). Nearly half of the women (45%) said they had been sexually abused at some point in their lives. These figures indicate that many of the women had experienced all four types of abuse.

Economic abuse

"My husband withdrew money from our joint account and built a house for his concubine."

40-year old woman, Dar es Salaam inner city

- Economic abuse mostly happened in a domestic or 'home' environment: most incidents were committed in a home (91%) – either that of the abuser (52%) or the woman (39%); most women were married (65%); 45% of abusers were spouses or partners.
- Most women said the worst incident happened when they were between 18 and 30 years old (58%) and that they were employed (56%) at the time.

- Most abusers were married, equally spread between 18 to 30 and 31 to 40 years old, and 59% were employed at the time they committed the abuse.
- Abuse rarely occurred on a once-off basis: 61% of women said it happened 'countless' times.
- Most women (56%) said the abuser had abused someone else in the same way before.
- Most women did not remain silent about economic abuse: 52% told someone immediately after the incident and 21% spoke about it a month or more later. Only 9% never told anyone about the most serious incident.
- It is also not true that women in any way condoned or accepted this type of abuse: 82% thought the worst incident of economic abuse that happened to them was a crime.

Emotional abuse

"He locked me inside the room and held a knife on me threatening to kill me."
26-year old woman, established suburb, Dar es Salaam

- 76% of women were emotionally abused.
- 55% said the worst incident was being humiliated, mostly in the company of others.
- Most incidents were committed in a home (76%) – either that of the woman (44%) or the abuser (32%).
- 79% of women said other people were present during the worst incident – 29% said these were children and 47% said they were family members.
- Fewer women were married (47%) than was the case for economic abuse, but more abusers in emotional incidents were partners or spouses than in the case of economic abuse (45%).
- Most women said the worst incident happened when they were between 18 and 30 years old (53%) and 52% were employed at the time, but only earned a small income.
- Most abusers were married, equally spread between 18 to 30 and 31 to 40 years old, and 56% were employed at the time they committed the abuse.
- 39% of survivors said emotional abuse happened countless times compared to 61% in the case of economic abuse.
- 46% of women said the abuser had abused someone else emotionally compared to 56% for economic abuse.
- Most survivors described symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder. 39% had considered suicide and 21% had attempted suicide.
- 61% told someone immediately after the incident and 25% spoke about it a month or more later. Only 9% never told anyone about the most serious incident.
- 85% thought the worst incident of economic abuse that happened to them was a crime.

Physical abuse

"One morning when we were preparing ... to go to work there was a misunderstanding ... he hit me ... unconscious. I was ... in hospital for 30 days."

37-year old woman, established suburb, Dar es Salaam

- 71% of women were physically abused.
- 50% said the worst incident was being slapped, hit, punched and beaten.
- Most incidents were committed in a home (86%) – either that of the woman (43%) or the abuser (43%).
- 76% of women said other people were present during the worst incident – 29% said that they were children and 25% said they were other relatives.
- Fewer women were married (59%) than was the case for economic abuse, but more abusers in physical abuse cases were partners or spouses (66%) than in emotional or economic abuse.
- Most women said the worst incident happened when they were between 18 to 30 years old (57%), and 56% were employed at the time, but only earned a small income. 44% depended on the income of others.
- In these cases most abusers were married (65%), equally spread between 18 to 30 and 31 to 40 years old, and 72% were employed at the time of the abuse.
- 33% said the abuse happened countless times.
- 66% of women said the abuser had abused someone else physically.
- The vast majority of respondents believed that abusers required specific forms of assistance (90%).
- The impact of physical abuse was largely described in terms of physical injuries and negative emotions. In 45% of incidents, no weapon (only physical strength) was used. Lethal weapons were rarely used: knives were reported by 9% of women and guns by 6%.
- Most survivors described symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder. 46% had considered suicide and 33% had attempted suicide.
- 72% told someone immediately after the incident and 21% spoke about it a month or more later. Only 7% never told anyone about the most serious incident.
- 97% thought the worst incident of physical abuse that they were subjected to was a crime.

Sexual abuse

"I was raped by six men from the Tanzania People's Defence Force after drinking with them and [I] refused to make love ... [with] their superior."

26-year old woman, Dar es Salaam inner city

- 45% of women were sexually abused.
- 40% said the worst incident was being raped.
- Most respondents (68%) said the assault happened in a home – either that of the abuser (42%) or the woman (32%). The remaining 32% of incidents happened in an outdoor public place.
- Only 26% of women said others were present during the incident.
- A minority of women were married (37%); 58% said they were single. Sexual abusers were less likely to be partners or spouses (54%) than in the case of physical abuse. Few sexual abusers were married at the time of the worst incident (32%).
- Victims of sexual abuse were mostly between 18 to 30 years old (68%). Few women who were sexually abused were employed (11%).
- Most victims of sexual abuse said the abuser was between 21 and 30 years old (59%), with only 13% between 31 to 40 years.
- 21% of respondents said the abuse happened countless times.
- According to the respondents, a startling number of sexual abusers had committed the crime before: 62% of women said this was the case.
- The impact of sexual abuse was largely described in terms of physical injuries (56%), although many respondents mentioned negative emotions (39%). Sexually transmitted diseases, HIV/Aids and pregnancy were also serious outcomes that respondents had to deal with.
- In 71% of incidents, no weapon (only physical strength) was used. Lethal weapons were rarely used: knives in two incidents and guns in one incident.
- Most respondents described symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder. 44% had considered suicide and 37% had attempted suicide.
- Most women did not remain silent about sexual abuse: 65% told someone immediately after the incident and 18% spoke about it a month or more later. Only 12% never told anyone about the most serious incident.

Women's experiences with service providers

- When describing their experiences with service providers, 43% of women were referring to incidents of physical abuse, 23% to sexual abuse, 23% to emotional abuse and 10% to economic abuse.
- The most popular professionals consulted by respondents were medical professionals (44%) and the police (39%). Very few women (5%) received legal assistance.
- Only 15% consulted a social worker and 14% went to a counsellor.
- 5% had not sought any professional help for the incident they considered to be the worst.
- By far the most popular source of assistance for abused women was relatives: 62% went to their family for help and 48% turned to friends.

- The vast majority of women (80%) who sought help from doctors were satisfied with the treatment. Although 70% were examined two or more hours after the incident, most (71%) said the delays were caused by their own inability to reach the hospital, rather than by delays caused by medical personnel. The police played a key role in referring women to hospital: 46% were referred by the police and 36% by family or friends.
- Women were most likely to go to the police to report physical abuse (43%) and sexual abuse (21%).
- Although a majority of women were satisfied with their treatment by the police, said they felt comfortable with the police, thought the police believed them and were willing to help, few indicated that standard police procedures for dealing with survivors of violence were followed. This suggests that expectations of and knowledge about the type of treatment they should receive from the police, as well as their basic rights, are poor.
- Most women attended counselling sessions a few times (67%) and were satisfied with the treatment they received from counsellors. However, as many as 44% were not satisfied because they did not feel the counselling had helped them.
- Although non-professional sources of assistance were popular among abused women, only 52% were satisfied with the help they received from these sources.

Perceptions of safety

- Over half of the women (52%) said they felt unsafe in their own home and 47% said they always felt this way.
- These fears were probably associated with domestic violence rather than with the fear of being robbed or attacked by strangers. Most said they would feel safer at home if the abuser received treatment, they were divorced or separated from the abuser, they could move to their own home, or even if the abuser died.
- A startling number of women (51%) said they thought the most unsafe place in Dar es Salaam was their own home.

Main conclusions

The results of the interviews with women confirm that abuse occurs in those environments where women should be the safest – the home – and is perpetrated by people whom women know, trust and often depend on, like partners and spouses. This was confirmed by the fact that just over half of the women said they felt unsafe in their own homes and as many thought their own homes were the most unsafe place in the city.

Although the vast majority of victims of all types of abuse believed that what had happened to them was a crime, the prevalence of all four types of abuse suggests

that it has become 'normalised'. Abuse was ongoing and was often witnessed by others (such as relatives and children). This raises questions about how those who were present responded to the abuse and were affected by it. The ongoing nature of abuse also heightens its negative impact.

Abusers were 'ordinary' men with profiles unlike those of other violent offenders who are mostly young, underemployed men between 15 and 25 years old. Abusers in this study were likely to be married, employed, of all ages, with a history of abusive behaviour. (The profile of sexual abusers more closely resembles that of other violent offenders than was the case for other abuse types.)

Victims of all types of abuse were likely to have been between the ages of 18 to 30 years when the abuse occurred, although sexual abuse victims were likely to be younger than victims of other types of abuse.

Most victims of emotional, physical and sexual abuse described symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder and many had considered or attempted suicide. The impact of this emotional distress on the ability of women to work, take care of their children and maintain relations with partners is likely to be negative.

Most of the women did tell someone about the abuse soon after it happened. Informal, personal sources of assistance were the most popular choice. Many victims sought help from medical professionals and the police and were generally satisfied with the treatment they received. Few went to a social worker or counsellor. Although a majority of women were satisfied with their treatment by the police, few indicated that standard police procedures for dealing with survivors of violence were followed. This suggests that knowledge about the rights and the treatment which survivors should receive from the police was poor among the women interviewed.